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PRESS RELEASE

LAWRENCE MAN CHARGED WITH FATAL ARSON

Boston, MA... A federal grand jury returned an indictment today charging a Lawrence man with two counts of arson, including an arson resulting in two deaths.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan; Jonathan Blodgett, Essex County District Attorney; William J. Hoover, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Joseph L. Marquis, Chief of the Lawrence Fire Department; John J. Romero, Chief of the Lawrence Police Department; Stephen D. Coan, Massachusetts State Fire Marshal; and Colonel Thomas G. Robbins, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police, announced today that **HARRY GUZMAN**, age 23, of 197 West Street, Lawrence, Massachusetts, has been charged in a two-count federal indictment with arson resulting in the death of two individuals and arson.

The charges are the result of a fourteen-month task force investigation into a series of arson fires that took place from March through June, 2003 all within a two-block radius in Lawrence.

“From a very young age we learn and understand the dangers of fire and we know from experience what a terrible crime arson is. It causes great damage property and great risk to firefighters and to innocent victims,” stated U.S. Attorney Sullivan. “In this case we saw the worst that can result from arson - the loss of two innocent lives. The U.S. Attorney’s Office is committed to working cooperatively with its partners in law enforcement to assist in arson investigations and when appropriate prosecute federally.”

“All the parties who worked on this investigation would like to extend their deepest sympathies to the families of Matilda Medina and her two-month-old daughter Angelic Duran for the terrible losses they have suffered,” added US. Attorney Sullivan.

“The Lawrence Arson Task Force is a dedicated group that worked countless days, nights and weekends to investigate the multiple arson fires and fatalities in the Manchester/West Street area of Lawrence,” stated Lawrence Fire Chief Marquis. “The City of Lawrence for months was

on edge and waiting for the next fire to be lit. The physical danger to the community and firefighters along with the psychological pressure, knowing that someone is deliberately setting fires to occupied dwellings is incomprehensible. I would like to thank the task force members for a job well done, and their dedicated service to the City of Lawrence.”

The indictment alleges that **GUZMAN** set a fire on April 3, 2003 at a building located at 48-50 Manchester Street in Lawrence, resulting in the deaths of two persons, twenty-six-year-old Matilda Medina and her two-month-old baby daughter, Angelic Duran. The indictment further alleges that, on June 9, 2003, **GUZMAN** set another fire at 34 Washington Street in Lawrence.

“Today’s indictment is the result of a tremendous amount of hard work and should serve as an example of how the fire services and law enforcement work together,” stated ATF Special Agent in Charge Hoover. “Since April 3, 2003, there has been one goal for ATF and our partners in this investigation and that was to bring to justice those responsible for the fire that took the lives of Matilda Medina and her two-month-old daughter Angelic Duran. I would like to thank the Lawrence Fire Department, the Lawrence Police Department, the State Fire Marshal’s Office, the Massachusetts State Police and the Essex County District Attorney’s Office for their cooperative efforts in this case.”

“I saw first hand the tragedy caused by arson at the fatal fire in Lawrence,” stated State Fire Marshal Coan. “This is an example of how serious the crime of arson is and why we need to fully investigate the cause of every fire. It shows how essential the coordinated, team-approach is to successful fire investigations and prosecutions.”

GUZMAN is currently in state custody in connection to charges relating to the June 9, 2003 fire. If convicted of the first of these charges, **GUZMAN** faces a potential maximum sentence of death or a term of life in prison. If convicted of the second charge, **GUZMAN** faces a minimum mandatory sentence of 5 years in prison and a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

“This was a serious crime and involved a lengthy investigation,” commented Lawrence Police Chief Romero. “As a result of a coordinated effort on the parts of the Lawrence Police, the ATF, the Lawrence Fire Department and the State Fire Marshals Office, Harry Guzman has been indicted today. I commend their efforts.”

The Task Force that investigated this case was comprised of members from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Lawrence Fire Department, the Lawrence Police Department, Massachusetts State Police Investigators assigned to the State Fire Marshal’s Office and Massachusetts State Police Detectives assigned to Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett’s Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys James L. Lang, Chief of Sullivan’s Major Crimes Unit, and Robert E. Richardson, also assigned to Sullivan’s Major Crimes Unit.

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